

Jackie Roby

Executive Leadership Advisor,
Decision Quality & Organizational Silence



When High Performers Go Quiet, Organizations Stop Learning

Jackie Roby works with organizations on a pattern most leadership programs miss: **the employees who learn to stay agreeable get promoted, and the organization loses their full judgment right when it needs it most.**



The Behavior You're Rewarding Is Not the Behavior You Think You're Rewarding

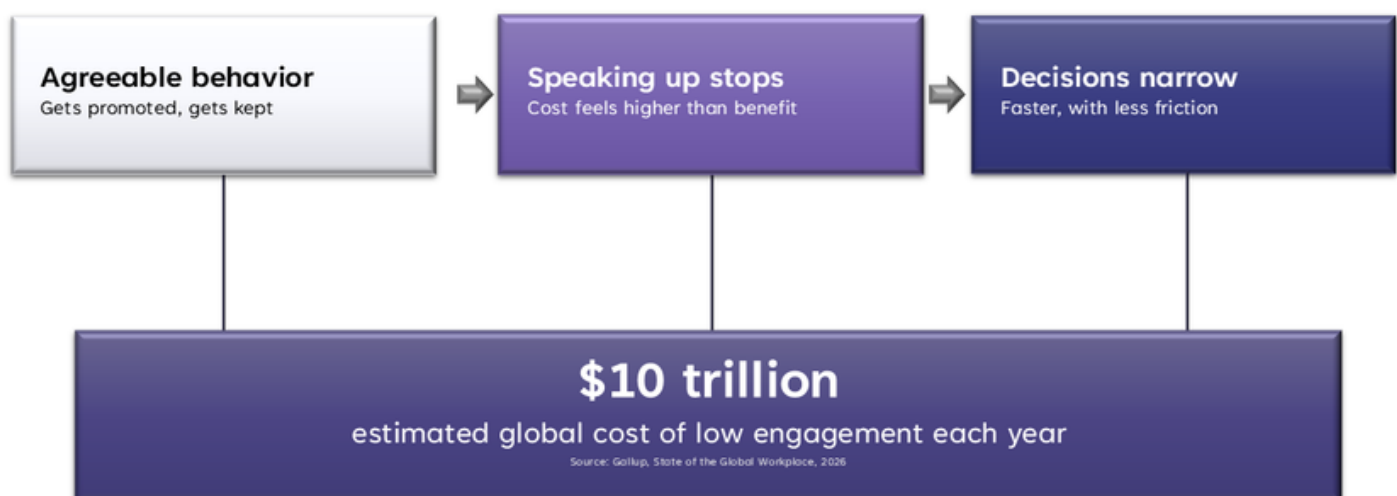
Most organizations believe they reward good judgment. What they often reward is the appearance of it: agreement, speed, and a manageable temperament in the room.

High performers learn this quickly. They stop voicing the objection that would have slowed a bad decision down. They wait to be asked before offering the idea which would have gotten cut anyway. They absorb friction instead of naming it, since naming it has a cost and staying quiet does not, at least not one anyone can see right away.

Gallup's 2026 Global Workplace Report puts the cost of low engagement at \$10 trillion in lost productivity worldwide.

A 2025 meta-analysis by Lainidi and colleagues found silence is more strongly linked to burnout than voice is, which means the quiet employee is often closer to leaving than the vocal one.

None of this shows up in a performance review. It shows up later, as a decision that gets made faster and worse, a leadership pipeline that looks full and isn't, and a resignation that surprises everyone except the person who left.



Signature Keynote:

When High Performers Go Quiet

The Organizational Cost of Self-Silencing

Premise:

The employees your organization is most afraid to lose are often the ones already editing themselves down to keep the room comfortable.

Description:

Your highest performers are still showing up, still delivering, still saying they're fine in every check-in.

What doesn't show up in the check-in: they're absorbing conflict instead of naming it, editing the idea before it leaves the room, and getting smaller so the meeting stays easy.

None of it registers as a problem until they're gone.

This talk names Palatability Culture: what it costs an organization to reward the agreeable version of its best people, and what it takes to get their full judgment back into the room, not just their attendance.

Ideal Audience:

Leadership teams, high-potential cohorts, and management populations inside organizations where sponsorship and promotion already run on comfort as much as capability.

Audience Outcomes:

- Recognize the difference between an employee who agrees and one who has stopped bringing up disagreement
- Question whether their promotion and sponsorship patterns reward judgment or reward ease
- Understand why silence and burnout track together more closely than silence and simple disengagement
- Practice one specific move for inviting dissent back into a meeting without staging a confrontation
- Leave with a shared vocabulary (Palatability Culture) for a pattern they could previously only describe as “vibes”

What Changes After the Talk

A keynote does not fix retention, burnout, or a leadership pipeline. What it can do is give a leadership team a shared, specific language for a pattern they've been managing around without naming.

After this talk, leaders have a name for the gap between an employee who is compliant and one who is contributing. Managers have a concrete question to bring into their next 1:1: what has this person stopped saying, and when did they stop saying it? Promotion conversations start to include a check most systems currently skip: did we promote judgment, or did we promote ease?

This is the start of a conversation, not the end of one. Organizations that get the most from this talk pair it with a working session on where Palatability Culture shows up in their own promotion and performance systems.

From the Room to the Work That Follows

In the room

Audience hears

The term “Palatability Culture,” named for the first time

Audience recognizes

The difference between agreement and an idea that got edited out

Audience feels

Recognition, sometimes discomfort, at a pattern they hadn't named

After the room

Leaders gain

Shared language for a pattern they could only describe as vibes before

Managers bring into 1:1s

One question: what has this person stopped saying, and when did they stop?

Promotion conversations add

A check: did we promote judgment, or did we promote ease?

The Three Stages of Palatability Culture

Palatability Culture develops in three recognizable stages.

Overcommitment: High performers take on more, say “yes” by default, and get rewarded for capacity rather than judgment.

Quietly Cracking: The cost of speaking up starts to outweigh the benefit. Objections, ideas, and early warnings get edited out before they reach a meeting. Everything still looks fine from the outside, since silence and strong performance can look identical for a long time.

Foundational Crumble: Decisions get made on less real information. The bench that was supposed to be ready for the next level isn't. People leave, and the exit interview never quite explains why.

Gartner's 2025 research on workplace culture found the share of employees willing to recommend their organization as a great place to work fell from 35 percent in 2022 to 26.5 percent in 2025, while the passive, disengaged share rose to 41.4 percent.

That is Stage Two, at scale, across the workforce most leaders are still measuring as fine.

How Overcommitment Escalates

Each unchecked “yes” compounds from silent strain to a bench that can't deliver.

Severity increases left to right



Why Jackie Roby

Jackie Roby spent close to two decades inside performance-driven industries, including hospitality and corporate environments, where staying easy to work with was often the fastest route to advancement and the surest way to go unheard once she arrived.

Palatable, Profitable, and Dying Inside, her forthcoming book, argues that organizations reward the quietest version of their best people, and pay for it later in slower decisions, thinner leadership pipelines, and turnover no one can quite explain.

That argument comes out of her own advisory work, and it's grounded in peer-reviewed research: Edmondson on psychological safety, Morrison and Milliken on organizational silence, Detert and Edmondson on self-censorship, and a 2025 review by Lainidi and colleagues linking silence to burnout, alongside current workplace data from Gallup, Gartner, McKinsey, and Deloitte.

She now advises organizations directly on where this pattern shows up in their own leadership pipeline, and has delivered keynotes and workshops for Guardian, Reliance Matrix, Black & Veatch, and Omni Hotels & Resorts, with ongoing speaking and advisory work for Premiere Advisory Group. She chairs the Global Wellness Institute's Inclusive Wellness Initiative and has spoken to audiences across the US, Dubai, Ibiza, and Mexico.

Her focus sits specifically with high-potential talent, including women of color, navigating advancement inside male-dominated industries, where the pressure to stay palatable is often highest and least discussed.



Let's Talk About the Right Room

Jackie Roby speaks to leadership teams, all-hands audiences, and high-potential cohorts, in keynote and workshop formats, in person or virtually.

"When High Performers Go Quiet" is the recommended lead talk for most organizations. "When Everyone Agrees, Someone's Not Talking" is available as a shorter, lower-lift entry point for teams looking for a first session before a larger engagement.

Palatable, Profitable, and Dying Inside, releasing October 2026, is open for pre-order now, with bulk copies available for conference attendees or leadership cohorts.

The next step is a 30-minute conversation about your audience and what you're hoping changes because of this session.

Let's Talk About the Audience Fit:

jackie@inspiredjourneyconsulting.com

Prefer to grab time directly? [Schedule a 30-minute conversation](#) on audience fit.

